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RELIGIONIS CAUSA

Moral Theology and the Concept of Holy War in the Dutch Republic

Joris van Eijnatten

ABSTRACT

The claim is widespread that the preservation, or reintroduction, of Western traditions of holy war in the post-Reformation period was due mostly to Protestantism, especially in its Calvinist variety. This article makes a case for examining the thought of a much broader selection of minor intellectuals on just and holy war than is usually done, and to do so in other national contexts than exclusively the English Puritan one. To test the apparently widespread view that, historically, Calvinism has had a particular proclivity for holy war, the article treats theological justifications of war in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Dutch moral theology. Showing that a full-blown concept of “holy war” was largely absent from Dutch theological thought, it falsifies the assumption that historical Calvinism (or Protestantism in general) is inherently belligerent. The article demonstrates that justifications of violence *religionis causa* and ideological motives for war have always been contingent, not on religions, but on the historical contexts in which those religions operate.

KEY WORDS: *holy war, just war, moral theology, Dutch Republic, Netherlands, Calvinism*

1. Introduction: Just War and Holy War

Religious or ideological motives played a role in legitimizing the violence of the medieval crusades. Of course, such motives have not been confined to the Middle Ages. They still often figure in prior or subsequent justifications of acts of warfare committed by one government or state against another. While it may be a matter of debate whether the defense of particular cultural or moral standards justifies warfare, the aggressive propagation of religious or ideological values using violent means is not generally accepted as just or justifiable. Theories excluding religion (and by inference, ideology) as a valid ground for warfare were already well developed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Despite the work of early modern just war theorists, however, religious motives continued to surface in theoretical, prescriptive, and propagandistic literature. In a well-known study, Roland Bainton argued that the

belligerence of Puritans in seventeenth-century England was largely inspired by religious motives. He offered a threefold typology of Christian attitudes towards war—pacifism, just war, and religious crusade—and claimed that Calvinism in particular “is associated with the crusade” (Bainton 1960, 14-15, 143-51).

Although our insight into the historical development of the concept of “holy war” has been somewhat refined, most studies on the subject tend to support Bainton’s claim that the preservation, or reintroduction, of Western traditions of holy war in the early modern period is due mostly to Protestantism, especially in its Calvinist variety. For example, John H. Yoder has argued that the apparent re-emergence of the medieval notion of holy war was a logical consequence of the magisterial Reformation (Yoder 1988, 1-23; see also Johnson 1984). None of the magisterial reformers condemned or questioned the right of a sovereign government to wage war or wield the civil sword. According to Yoder, the Protestant Reformation even conferred creedal status on the idea of just war by introducing it to the classic confessions. Yet neither the Belgic Confession (1561) nor the Heidelberg Catechism (1563), both of which are pertinent to the Dutch Republic, do so explicitly.¹ Rejecting the Anabaptist view of civil government, Article 36 of the Belgic Confession does proffer a positive formulation of the government’s role in maintaining the pure faith. The passage could be interpreted as a vindication of holy war, but not necessarily so:

[T]he government’s task is not limited to caring for and watching over the public domain but extends also to upholding the sacred ministry, with a view to removing and destroying all idolatry and false worship of the Antichrist; to promoting the kingdom of Jesus Christ; and to furthering the preaching of the gospel everywhere; to the end that God may be honored and served by everyone, as he requires in his Word.

We could fault Guido de Brès (1522-1567), the Confession’s author, for failing to draw a clear distinction between domestic and international law, but the absence of legal clarity on

¹ Together with the *Canones* of Dordt (1619), these texts were officially recognized as the “formularies of unity” of the public (“state”) church.

this point was common in the sixteenth century. Calvin, too, derived international war from domestic defense, putting an invading prince on a par with a common thief (Yoder 1988, 3-4). Given that the reformers were committed to the rule *cuius regio eius religio*, the distinction between defending their local version of the Reformation and supporting the external war effort of their territorial prince could, admittedly, be a fine one.

The association of Calvinism with holy war thought is partly due to the Anglophone bias of much research, which has focused almost exclusively on Puritans in the early seventeenth century. This applies even to James Turner Johnson, whose subtle work on the history of just and holy war is still authoritative (Johnson 1975; Johnson 1981; and Little 1991). According to Johnson, just war doctrine in its classic form, that is, as a doctrine containing statements on both *ius ad bellum* (the right to make war) and *ius in bello* (that which is allowable in the course of war) only began to be formulated around 1500. In the Middle Ages, the *ius ad bellum* was a doctrine distinct from the *ius in bello*. The former was treated by religious writers (i.e. clergy), the latter by secular ones (i.e. jurists concerned with civil law and writers on the medieval knightly code). In Johnson's interpretation, the two doctrines—the religious and the secular—merged in the sixteenth century, but ultimately gave rise to two new and divergent traditions of just war thought. These two later traditions were a theological one concerned with war for the cause of religion (holy war), and a naturalist one that disallowed war for religious purposes and grounded the *ius ad bellum* in natural law. Johnson differs from Bainton in viewing seventeenth-century holy war thought as a variety of just war doctrine, rather than as a distinct genre (Johnson 1975, 81; Johnson, 1991, 6).

If only by implication or suggestion, Johnson attributes the revival of holy war thought to Calvinism. Fundamental to his account are the *Sermonum decades quinque de potissimis christianae religionis capitibus* (1552) by the reformer Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575) (Johnson 1975, 110-13; according to Johnson (110), the *Decades* are “probably the single

most important source for holy war ideas in English thought.”). Comparable, in terms of influence, to Calvin’s *Institutio*, the Swiss reformer’s fifty didactic sermons were soon translated into German, French, English, and Dutch (Opitz 2004, 377). Bullinger treats war in the ninth sermon of the second decade, where he makes the then common observation that a Christian government is permitted to wage war (Bullinger 1965, fol. 67, col. 4 to fol. 71, col. 3: second decade, sermon ix). Bullinger’s introduction of religious considerations into his discussion of legitimate warfare leads him in Johnson’s view effectively to justify holy war. On the basis of his analysis of the *Decades* and several English writings from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Johnson circumscribes the Protestant concept of holy war with reference to six “positions”: 1) emphasis on religious purpose (what Bainton called “holy cause”); 2) expansion of classic just war doctrine to include defensive war by the state with the aim of defending religion; 3) introduction of a concept of offensive war for the sake of religion (for example a war “commanded” by God); 4) assertion of the necessity for soldiers to be personally godly; 5) a change in the meaning of the term *just* war from a *justifiable* to a *justified* war, implying that both the cause and its champions are thoroughly righteous; and 6) the occasional insistence that a holy war be fought without restraint (Johnson 1975, 104, 132).²

Thus, as far as the early modern concept of holy war is concerned, the focus has until now been almost only on a limited number of texts written by English Puritans (Johnson 1975; Johnson 1991; Little 1991; Janssen 2004; but see also Piirimäe 2002). At the same time, research on just war thought has concentrated on a few major thinkers (notably Francisco de Vitoria, Francisco Suarez, Hugo Grotius, John Locke, and Emmerich de Vattel), while most historical overviews focus almost exclusively on the twentieth century (for example Walzer 1977; Lienemann 2000; a quite extensive treatment of sixteenth-century

² Bainton 1960, 148 suggested that a holy war is characterized by four features: a) a holy cause; b) God’s direction and help; c) godly crusaders and ungodly enemies; and d) unsparing prosecution.

Catholic thought may be found in Regout 1935, 121-278). This article makes a case for examining the thought of a much broader selection of minor intellectuals on just and holy war, and to do so in other national contexts than exclusively the English one. More specifically, this article treats theological justifications of war in the work of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Dutch theologians, in order to test the apparently widespread assumption that, historically, Calvinism has had a particular proclivity for holy war. The larger question raised here is whether it is historically (rather than morally) justifiable to identify specific religious traditions with a repugnant or censurable ethics, as is now often done in popular discussions concerning, for instance, Islam. Even the penchant for holy war attributed to English Puritans may well be the result of implicit assumptions guiding the selection of source material. In order to avoid this pitfall, this article is based on a large number of historical documents.

The Dutch case is especially interesting, and not just because the Dutch Republic was the theological center of international Calvinism. Dutch debates were held with a specific form of violence in mind, that of rebellion or revolt.³ Like the duel, rebellion qualifies as a form of internal violence; but the Dutch example is complicated because the government against which the Dutch rebelled could be regarded as an external enemy. Be that as it may, the issue of rebellion was relevant to the Dutch Republic, which owed its very existence to a revolt against its rightful Spanish overlord.

To examine the role of holy war thought in Dutch Calvinism, I shall make use of Johnson's six criteria mentioned above, focusing particularly on the *ius ad bellum* rather than the *ius in bello*. The following draws on two kinds of source material. On the one hand, I have examined academic treatises, in particular writings on moral theology. On the other, I have consulted explanations of the Heidelberg Catechism, one of the three formally accepted

³ The issue is treated in Johnson 1981, Ch. 3. The literature on early modern theories of rebellion is large; for a recent treatment with an up-to-date bibliography, see Ottow 2004.

confessions of the so-called *Publicque Kerk*, the state-sponsored Reformed Church of the Dutch Republic. Taken together, these treatises, textbooks, and guidelines may be regarded as a highly representative corpus of ethical writing on the justifiableness of waging war. Because of the theological nature of this material, I have paid particular attention to biblical proofs and references to other (i.e. non-biblical) authorities. The article is structured as follows. The first section concentrates on the “theology” of war in a number of academic treatises produced or read in the Dutch Republic. This is followed by a similar analysis of popular writing on ethics. Finally, I shall draw some conclusions concerning the concept of holy war in Dutch Calvinism.

One final observation is in order. In the source material, the term “holy war” as such is rarely used in the context of justifying violence. If holy wars or *bella sacra*⁴ are mentioned, they are identified with the crusades against infidels, especially the medieval ones against Islam, waged under the pretext of freeing the Holy Land from Muslim tyranny solely to advance papal power (thus Maastricht 1749-53 IV, 359). By contrast, the term “Christian war” referred to the never-ending “spiritual battle” against temptation (Broad 1637), in the way that John Bunyan interpreted holy war as a war against the devil (Bunyan 1682; Bunyan 1685). I shall here use “holy war” as a synonym for a war waged *religionis causa*, for the sake of religion.

2. Moral Theology and the *Ius Ad Bellum*

Early modern theological thought concerning the *ius ad bellum* was mostly a combination of arguments derived from the Bible, Roman law, Ambrose, Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas. Writers in this tradition usually mentioned three criteria by which to judge the justness of a war: right authority (i.e. a sovereign ruler), just cause (such as defense, retaking something

⁴ I have found “holy war” mentioned only once in the title of a publication: Uythage 1666, where the Antichrist is identified with Mohammed.

wrongly taken, and punishment of evil) and right intention (which excluded ambition or glory). Often further criteria were mentioned, including announcement of intention, last resort, and reasonable hope of success (Childress 1978 offers an excellent overview of these and other criteria). The standard Protestant account, present in practically all sources consulted for this article, generally attempted to show that a Christian government may wage war. The same scriptural arguments crop up in almost every theological commentary on just war.⁵

This section reviews in chronological order a number of academic treatises that influenced or were otherwise representative of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Dutch theology. I shall begin with the *Ethices christianae libri tres* (1577) by the French lawyer Lambert Daneau (1530-1595), which is generally regarded as the first attempt by a “Calvinist” to treat ethics separately from dogma (Daneau 1614, 185-93).⁶ A convert to Protestantism, Daneau left France for Geneva in 1573 after the massacre of St. Bartholomew, worked briefly as a professor of theology at the new Leiden University in 1581-1582, and then returned to France. His explanation of the sixth commandment is concerned with the lawfulness of the Christian magistrate’s power to kill, and violence for the sake of religion figures prominently in his account. Rejecting Julian the Apostate’s contention that the New Testament abrogated worldly power (Matthew 5:39), Daneau cites Romans 13:4 and Augustine.⁷ The power of the sword is to be exercised both at home and abroad (*domi & foris*) against heretics (*haeretici*), who dishonor divine things, and criminals (*scelerati*), such as rioters and murderers, who disturb the civil peace. In addition, of course, the magistrate has the power to restrain or punish external enemies in just and legitimate wars.

⁵ All references in this article to the Bible are to the Authorized King James Version, which most resembles the Dutch *Statenvertaling*, the official Bible translation of 1637. Arguments gleaned from Scripture include the mandate and the rules for waging war provided in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 13; Deuteronomy 20) and confirmed in the New (Luke 13:4; Romans 13:4); and the examples of pious but warlike leaders such as Moses, Joshua, the Judges, and David (1 Samuel 25:28; Hebrews 11:32-34), and Roman centurions (Matthew 8:9; Acts 10:1-2).

From the examples Daneau provides, we may infer that a war for the sake of religion is necessarily a just war. The Old Testament leaders (Moses in Deuteronomy 20, Joshua, Saul, David, and other kings of Judah) fought wars with God on their side, and in the Bible just wars are called divine wars (2 Chronicles 10:15). In Scripture God is often described as a Lord of hosts, a *Deus militiae* (Exodus 15:3). The Marcionites (whose views Tertullian seems to support)⁸ are wrong to interpret John 18:11, where Christ commands Peter to sheath his sword, as a refutation of all warfare. Why else should the letter to the Hebrews mention David, Samuel, and the prophets, as men “who through faith subdued kingdoms” (Hebrews 11:33)?⁹ Further support comes from the twelfth-century *Decretum* of Gratian,¹⁰ Thomas Aquinas,¹¹ and Peter Martyr (Martyr 1575, 190-95: “De bello”; also in Kingdon 1980, 144-54).¹² Daneau takes exception to the pagan belief expressed by Livy that a war is just and right when it is necessary.¹³ Those wars are just “which are recognized by the Word of God” (*quae ex Dei verbo suscipiuntur*). War undertaken in obedience to God is a righteous war, argues Daneau, again with reference to Augustine.¹⁴ Finally, Melanchthon defended the notion of religious war, including war against the Turks, who invade Christian lands and threaten Christians with perpetual violence (Melanchthon 1538, 93-96).

Like Daneau, Amandus Polanus à Polansdorf (1561-1610), professor in Basel, was a first-generation Calvinist. His *Syntagma theologiae christianae* (1609-1610) contains a chapter on *iustitia bellica*, in which he insists on deriving his theology of war exclusively

⁶ There is a substantial treatment of Daneau’s ethics (but little on holy war thought) in Strohm 1996.

⁷ Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, I, xxi.

⁸ Daneau refers to Tertullian, *De idololatria*; and Lactantius, *De divinae institutiones* V, cap. xix and xxii.

⁹ Daneau refers to Augustine, *De civitate Dei* I, xxi and XIX, vii (on the misery of war); and Ambrose on Luke 3.

¹⁰ Friedberg 1879-81 I, 894-895 = Gratian, *Decretum*, Pars II, Causa XXIII, Quaestio II.

¹¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Secunda pars secundae partis, quaestio XL, which is wholly devoted to the issue of war.

¹² To prove that Christians may conduct wars, Vermigli devotes a whole paragraph to biblical statements concerning wars fought for the sake of religion, concluding “Ergo bellum potest esse exercitium fidei” (§ 5). Apart from this, Vermigli has relatively little to say on religion as a just cause; his (extensive) text is mostly intended as a refutation of Anabaptists.

¹³ Titus Livius, *Ab urbe condita* IX, 1.

¹⁴ Augustine, *Contra Faustum*, XXII, 74-75.

from the Bible (Polanus à Polansdorf 1624, col. 2250-2258: Lib. X., Cap. LXVII, “De justitia principis seu magistratus bellica”). Polanus defines just war as a war legitimately waged by a prince or high magistrate or other lawful magistrate for a just cause and a just end. The righteous Asa conducted such a war against the idolatrous Jerobeam (2 Chronicles 13). There are two kinds of causes, those which follow from ourselves (*a nobis*) and those which follow from others (*ab aliis*). The causes *a nobis* are threefold. The first is to preserve and defend the pure worship of God against reckless corruptors and violent oppressors, both domestic and external. For the defense of the true religion, Scripture even allows war to be waged by inferior magistrates (Polanus offers no biblical references here). The second reason for war is to compel those who stubbornly resist public justice, such as the rebellious Benjamites (Judges 20); the third cause is to defend or regain territory, liberty, and public welfare. The causes *ab aliis* are twofold. The first, again, is religious: to help our neighbors or fellow orthodox believers when they are tyrannically oppressed in their exercise of the true religion. Constantine helped to defeat no less than six imperial enemies of the Christian faith: Diocletian, Maximian, Galerius, Maxentius, Maximinus, and Licinius. It is therefore just to aid those beyond our borders who for religious reasons suffer injustice from a tyrant. For this reason the Germans wage war to defend Hungary from the Turks, who are the hereditary enemies of Christianity. The second cause *ab aliis* is to free from enemy hands our neighbors and above all those who are bound to us by blood or by treaty (as Abraham saved Lot in Genesis 14, and Israel aided the Gibeonites in Joshua 10).

A similar focus on holy war as a just war may be found in *Theologia casuum* (1621) by Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588-1638), a Calvinist theologian at Herborn (Germany) renowned for his work on encyclopaedia. Alsted, who treats the topic in his overview of “cases of conscience” relating to the sixth commandment, mentions twelve criteria for a just war (Alsted 1621, 361-67: “Casus conscientiae de bello”). The Old Testament figures

prominently in his account. His first two arguments explicitly condone holy war. A war is just when conducted against idolaters who openly blaspheme God (Deuteronomy 12:1-4) and against those who deviate from the worship of God (Deuteronomy 13). The remaining causes are concerned with such issues as breaking allegiance (the Moabites in 2 Kings 3), rebellion (Sheba in 2 Samuel 20), the sinful protection of evildoers (among the Benjamites) and public injury to the prince (Hanun in 2 Samuel 10). Deterring enemies is a just cause, and so too is the abduction of relatives by an enemy (Lot in Genesis 14). The final two causes concern tyranny; both justify rebellion.

Alsted devotes most space to a consideration of the *ius in bello*, where the laws given to Moses apply (Deuteronomy 20). He ends with seven reasons why a Christian prince is permitted to subdue heathens by war. Heathens may violently be subjugated if they impede the Christian faith *in nostra terra*, either through blasphemy, persuasion, or persecution; if they attempt to lead subjects away from the Christian religion; if they offend Christians; if they obstruct the propagation of the Christian religion among our neighbors; if they practice cannibalism; if they wage war against believers who have converted to Christianity; and if they foster factiousness among us. A particular guideline applies to the Turks. A Christian prince has the right of continuous warfare against the Turks, since they occupy Christian territory, persecute the Christian religion, and wage war against Christians.

The *Compendium theologiae christianae* (1626) by Johannes Wollebius (1586-1629) was one of the influential overviews of Reformed theology of the period. Frequent re-editions appeared, especially in the Dutch Republic. The second volume (“de Deo colendo”) contains Wollebius’s ethics (Wollebius 1935, 173-76: Lib. II, caput x). His chapter on the sixth commandment has a positive twist. Rather than interpret the commandment as an injunction not to kill, Wollebius interprets it as a directive to preserve life. Nevertheless, Christians are permitted to wage war, on condition that it is done so on the authority of the magistrate, and

only when it is just and necessary. A war is lawful when it is just in its cause, good in its end, and waged according to scriptural rules. In his very brief discussion of *bellum iustum*, Wollebius does not mention religion at all. Nor does Antonius Walaeus (1573-1639), one of the stricter Calvinists who fled from the Southern Netherlands to the Dutch Republic, refer to war in his *Compendium ethicae aristotelicae* (Walaeus 1643a). In his *Loci communes* he limits himself to affirming that Christians may wage war on Sundays, a question reminiscent of strict observance of the Sabbath in Maccabean times (Walaeus 1643b, col. 303a).

The English divine William Ames (1576-1633) worked for some time at the university in Franeker in the north of the Dutch Republic and is usually seen as one of the early representatives of seventeenth-century Dutch Puritanism. His response to the question “Whether or no Warre bee lawfull for Christians” in *Conscience with the power and cases thereof* (1639) has been treated by Johnson (Ames 1975, 184-92; Johnson 1975, 171-74). The gist of Ames’s account resembles that of Wollebius. He does not mention religion as a cause of war, emphasizing instead that war is an evil, and one of the heaviest of God’s punishments.

Of greater interest is Ames’s spiritual colleague in pursuing the pious life, the Utrecht theology professor Gisbertus Voetius (1589-1676). In the disputations he required his students to hold in the 1650s and 1660s, Voetius made a point of regarding the Dutch Revolt as a holy war, that is, a defensive war fought (in part) for the sake of religion (Voetius 1648-69 V, 813-18: disputation “De temporali potestate Papae,” respondens Gulielmus Nollet). Objecting to the claim that the Dutch war against Spain was waged not for the Reformed faith but exclusively for freedom, both political and religious, Voetius points out that the war went through various phases. The first stage (1566-1567) of the war, during the governorship of Margaret of Parma, was begun in response to the persecution of the Reformed and for the sake of the Reformed religion. In the struggle of William of Orange against the Duke of Alva, which took place during the second stage (1567-1573), the defense of liberty against Spanish

tyranny was accepted as the just cause of war. The third phase ended with the Union of Utrecht of 1579. In this phase, war was waged on the one hand for liberty and political security, and on the other for the true religion, with the explicit exclusion of the papist faith. This historical argument reappears in a tentative discussion of war in Voetius's treatment of the Decalogue (Voetius 1648-69 IV, 804-06). This section of the *Selecta disputationes* includes a "syllabus" of questions with incomplete responses. It is clear that Voetius regarded the *bellum Belgicum* as just, and that in his view religious motives were intertwined with the political.

Elsewhere, Voetius has one of his students respond to the question whether a Christian prince legitimately may wage war against the pope. The response is affirmative. The pope seeks to further his power over other sovereigns by all possible means, and the potential exercise of papal tyranny must be prevented by the use of arms. Also, the pope specifically shows hostility towards Reformed polities, either openly or by way of secret attacks, or internally by fomenting betrayal and factiousness. The only way to prevent this is by war. The pope, furthermore, seeks to impose his tyranny on those churches he has subdued or those which attempt to throw off his yoke. Again, this provides a just cause for war. If in the past Christian princes waged just wars against the Saracens and Turks, it is all the more just to wage them now against the pope. Finally, the pope regularly condemns the Reformed as heretics, and it is known that in his view heresy requires the loss of life, honor, and property. A pre-emptive war is therefore justified (Voetius 1648-69 II, 856-63: disputation "an sedes Romana compatibilis sit cum Politiis Reformatis," respondens Nicolaus Sz. Illye-Falvi). Another question concerns the persons permitted to draw up a treaty of war against the pope, or independently initiate a policy of "containment" against him. Princes and magistrates have this right if the pope treats them aggressively or undermines their domestic authority. In fact,

all princes who have the power and the occasion may rightfully wage war against the pope (Voetius 1648-69 II, 863-64.).

Like Voetius, Johannes Hoornbeeck (1617-1666) qualifies as one of the major Dutch exponents of orthodox scholasticism, and who at the same time emphasized the practice of piety. His *Theologiae practicae* (1663) contains a full chapter “De bello” (Hoornbeeck 1689, II, 550-59: Liber X, cap XIII). War, affirms Hoornbeeck, is an evil, and together with hunger and the plague it is one of God’s chief scourges (Leviticus 26:25; 2 Samuel 24:13). However, a war is in so far a good if its cause is just, grave, and necessary. Thus, defense is a just cause of war. Territory lost through unjust violence may be regained (as Ahab reclaimed Ramoth from the Syrians in 1 Kings 22:3). Violence may be used to occupy territory at the behest of God, as the Israelites did against the Canaanites (Deuteronomy 7:1-2: “when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them.”). Hence the ancient Jews—Hoornbeeck is the only theologian examined for this article who introduces Hebraic learning to just war theory—distinguished between a commanded or obligatory war (*bellum praeceptum*) on the one hand, and a permitted or voluntary war (*bellum ultroneum*) on the other. The latter was waged against neighboring peoples by decision of the supreme council.¹⁵ Avarice (witness the Syrian king Ben-hadad in 1 Kings 20:7) and ambition (Amaziah in 2 Kings 14:9-10) do not provide just cause for war.¹⁶

Now comes a significant passage, in the light of which Hoornbeeck stands apart from his colleague Voetius. War, he insists, may not be waged for the sake of religion. The faith is not supported by carnal but by spiritual weapons (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). Christ did not send soldiers to subdue the world, but teachers, and he imposed on mankind his teaching rather than the sword. Hoornbeeck cites the obvious authority for this resolute claim: Franciscus de

¹⁵ Hoornbeeck cites the Mishna Sanhedrin, Cap. 1; Hoornbeeck 1689, II, 551. Similar arguments may be found in Maimonides; see Johnson 1975, 129-31.

¹⁶ Concerning avarice and ambition, Hoornbeeck cites Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, II, 38; Marcus Junianus Justinus, *Epitoma Historiarum Philippicarum*, 3-5; and Augustine, *Civitate Dei*, Lib. IV, cap. 6 (conclusion).

Vitoria's *Relectio* VI. "Causa iusti belli non est diversitas religionis," he quotes: "Difference of religion is not a cause of just war." Only "injuria accepta," a wrong received, is the single and only just cause of war (Vitoria 1917, 427-29; translation at p. 170).¹⁷ A just war is thus a defensive war, to protect the liberty of oneself and one's own, including property; as Abraham rescued his relative Lot from the enemy (Genesis 14:14).¹⁸ However, Hoornbeeck seems to backtrack on his support for Vitoria's outspoken contention that religion is not a cause of war. He states, "I do not exclude religious liberty, and the defense of those who foster it wherever they can."¹⁹ For although religion is not to be promulgated by force, its propagators may be defended; and religion is to be supported by force when it is attacked or abandoned by others. Hoornbeeck mentions the German jurist Benedict Carpzov (1595-1666), who contended that it is just and lawful to commence a war for the defense of religion, but not for the purpose of propagating it (Hoornbeeck 1689, II, 553; Carpzov 1640). Luther and Erasmus, he further elaborates, denounced the appetite for war rather than war in itself.²⁰

Several important late seventeenth-century textbooks do not mention the idea of war *religionis causa* in the context of theological ethics. The *Compendium theologiae Christianae didactico-elencticum* (1686) by Johannes à Marck (1655-1731) and the eighteenth-century commentary on it by Bernhardinus de Moor (1709-1780) discuss war in the chapter "On church government" ("De regimine ecclesiae"), where the power of the magistrate is touched upon (Marck 1722, 688-90; Moor 1761-74 VI, 510-11).

The main point is that Christians possess the *ius belli gerendi*, which A. Marck proves by citing the usual passages from the Old and the New Testament. De Moor offers the example of the "angelic" Theban soldiers, who were decimated by the emperor Maximian for

¹⁷ Hoornbeeck also quotes Vitoria's denial that extension of empire and personal glory justify war.

¹⁸ Hoornbeeck refers also to Florus, *Epitomae de Tito Livio bellorum*, I, iii.

¹⁹ 'Nec omitto libertatem religionis, & defensionem eorum qui eam ubi licet promovent'; Hoornbeeck 1689, II, 553.

²⁰ Surprisingly, says Hoornbeeck, Vitoria too denounces Luther for denying that Christians may take up arms against the Turks; see Vitoria 1917, 418. Hoornbeeck refers the reader to Erasmus: cf. his mention of Johannes

refusing to join in the sacrifices to the Roman Gods.²¹ Petrus van Mastricht (1630-1706) was the successor to the chair previously occupied by Voetius. Although a “Voetian” in his theology, his *Idea theologia moralis*, appended to the enlarged edition (1698) of the *Theoretico-practica theologia* (first edition 1682-1687), betrays the influence of William Ames (Mastricht 1749-53, IV, 763-64). It does not come as a surprise, then, that Van Mastricht’s brief treatment of war in the section on “the exercise of godliness with respect to our neighbors” makes no mention of war for the sake of religion. He elaborates on relations with evil and hostile people. It is best to avoid, improve or forgive them, seek reconciliation, or treat them with Christian modesty. This rules out an offensive war for the sake of profit, which would amount to mere public robbery. A defensive war, waged to protect oneself and one’s own, is permissible. A war of retribution, with the purpose of punishing evil acts perpetrated against the government or its subjects, is allowed also. A gross injury is a just cause of war, as long as all other means have been tried to redress the wrong (Deuteronomy 20; Judges 20). The *Compendium theologiae didactico-elencticae* (1695) by the Genevan theologian François Turretini (1623-1687) similarly contains the standard just war theory and avoids all mention of religious warfare (Turretinus 1731, 413-15). Johann Heinrich Heidegger (1633-1698), who held the theological chair at Zurich, explicitly rejects war for religious motives, which he ascribes above all to the “Roman Hierarchy, the Beast and its horns” (Heidegger 1700, 584-86).

In his chapter on the duties of soldiers in *La morale chrétienne* (1692), Bénédict Pictet (1655-1724), Turretini’s nephew and successor to the theological chair at Geneva, sets out by arguing in traditional vein that Christians may wage war (Pictet 1710, 445-53: Ch. XVI “Des devoirs des hommes de guerre”). Right reason does not oppose war as such, since self-defense

Philonius Dugo, *Christianae institutiones*, I, cap v; and the section “De Mohammedismo” in Hoornbeeck 1697, 168-69, where he himself discusses the views of Luther and Erasmus. For Erasmus, see Fernández 1973.

²¹ The story derives from St. Eucher of Lyons; De Moor himself refers to Friedrich Spanheim, *Summa historiae ecclesiasticae*, III, cap IX, § 7, col. 770-71.

cannot be considered unjust, and nor does Scripture condemn all war. Pictet offers the common arguments,²² ending with the holy wars (*guerres saintes*) mentioned in the Apocalypse. The history of the church shows that many Christians have fought in wars; and right reason tells us that disallowing warfare will open the door to all kinds of *brigandages*. The usual objections do not apply.²³ Neither are the Church Fathers authoritative in this regard, if only because they do not agree among themselves. Pictet devotes more space than usual among writers in the Reformed tradition to the opinions of the Fathers, citing among others Origen, Tertullian, and Ambrose.²⁴ Pictet then offers a vast list of propositions concerning war. The first states that all defensive wars are just, since the law of nature enjoins us to protect ourselves. The second insists that it is permissible to wage war in order to protect allies. An offensive war is just when its cause is the reparation of an injustice. War must be waged only in last resort, since it is a terrible thing (as Fénelon recently pointed out in *Télémaque*).²⁵ Neither ambition nor glory is a just cause of war.²⁶ Pictet's concern to highlight the Fathers and refer to works of classical and modern literature reflects a literary approach common to the period around 1700. *La morale chrétienne* was oriented towards a broader francophone public (which would have included the Dutch cultural elite).

A very limited concept of war for the sake of religion emerges in the posthumous *Explicatio catecheseos Heidelbergensis* (1718) by the theology professor Herman Alexander Röell (1653-1718) (Roëll 1728, 766-76). The book was edited and probably substantially

²² Abraham waged war against his enemies (Genesis 14); the people of God often waged war at God's behest; God provided a *ius in bello* (Deuteronomy 20); David waged war to defend his ambassadors; the letter to the Hebrews observed that Jephthah, Samson, Gideon, and Barak had conquered kingdoms through faith (Hebrews 11:32-34); rulers may procure a peaceful life for their subjects (1 Timothy 2:2); John the Baptist did not ordain soldiers to quit the military (Luke 3:11, 14); the centurion did not leave the army after his conversion (Acts 10).

²³ The prophecy of Isaiah 2:4 refers to an ideal world, in which all men are inspired by the Gospel, but this world does not now exist; Matthew 5:39 is not intended to preclude the possibility of self-defense, but only opposed to revenge; Paul in 2 Corinthians 10:4 is merely exercising his right to chastise those who deserve it; James 4:1 merely states that wars are the result of passions, which nobody will deny; Matthew 26:52 is merely concerned with those who fight for no reason at all.

²⁴ Origen, *Philocalia* XX, ix; Tertullian, *De idololatria* XIX, 2 and *De corona militis* 11, 3; Ambrose, *On the duties of the clergy*, I, 129.

²⁵ François de la Mothe Fénelon, *Avantures de Télémaque*, books 3 and 11.

²⁶ On glory, cf. Seneca, *De clementia*, II, iv, 2.

enlarged by Röell's son Dionysius Andreas (1689-1733), a professor of philosophy, which perhaps accounts for its non-theological slant. Röell conventionally contends that only defensive wars are lawful, and that war for the sake of aggrandizing power or wealth amount to public robbery. Natural law permits us to defend not only our lives, but also our liberty and property. It obliges us, as much as we are able, to defend our liberty, so that we may freely serve only God. Experience teaches us that tyrants often violate, not so much body and property, but conscience, the freedom of which we must above all things strive to preserve. For this purpose God expressly gave the Israelites the right to defend against enemies their hereditary lands, temple, and religion; and it follows that God permits this also by natural law. Elsewhere, Röell observes that many so-called Christians unfortunately wage war, including above all the papists, who have always shed the blood of the pious (1728, 788). Their reign is described in Revelation, for example in Revelation 17:6, "And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." The papists, moreover, wrongly called their crusades *bella sacra*; the killing of thousands of people under the pretence of making known the name of Christ is, in fact, a certain mark of Antichrist.

The Groningen professor Cornelius van Velzen (1696-1752), finally, was unable to complete his main work on moral theology. The first volume of his *Institutiones theologiae practicae*, which contains a general ethical outline, appeared in 1748, towards the end of his life; the second volume, devoted to specific duties, was published only in 1758. In the latter volume he discusses the duties of the magistrate to defend the civic state against internal and external injury (Velzen 1748-58 II, 468-70: Cap. XLIII, § XIII). Enemies may be held at bay by arms and armies, and by war itself. It is legitimate for Christian nobles (*proceres*) to fight, since God often commanded his people to wage war in the Bible, providing them also with rules *in bello* (Deuteronomy 20:4; Exodus 15:3).²⁷ In addition, right (*sana*) reason teaches us

²⁷ Van Velzen also mentions the usual arguments and passages: pious men like Abraham, Moses, Joshua, and David waged wars; and Matthew 8:8-10, Acts 10:1 and Luke 3:14.

that it is legitimate to defend oneself against unjust force, and to repel force by force. A war may be waged defensively as well as offensively, as long as the initial damage caused by the enemy is extensive (*momentosissima*) and all other means have been tried to settle the dispute. Van Velzen only mentions religion when discussing the lawfulness of making treaties. He contends that a treaty may be concluded with princes and nobles belonging to either the false or the true religion, since this is a civil rather than religious matter. However, treaties with atheist princes or with enemies of the Reformed religion cannot be relied upon; the ancient rule “*haereticis fidem non esse habendam*” still applies. Van Velzen’s chapter on “*De concordia, pacis studio*” in the first volume of his *Institutiones* contains an illuminating overview of different kinds of wars (Velzen 1748-58 I, 644-45: Cap. XXVII, § XV). He mentions religious wars, which are sometimes called sacred or theological; but he defines them as academic skirmishes waged among professors and students, or among members of the church. They resemble the literary wars (*bella litteraria*) among scholars of law, medicine, philosophy, history, or grammar.

Only a minority of the Calvinist moral theologians discussed in this section defended a concept of holy war. It is important to note that all remained within the just war tradition, and that the emphasis they put on war for the sake of religion varied considerably. Some theologians, such as Daneau, Polanus, Alsted, and Voetius, subscribed to the more important positions on holy war mentioned by Johnson. They stressed religious purpose (position 1); they defended the idea of defensive war by the state with the aim of defending religion (position 2); and they maintained a concept of offensive war for the sake of religion (position 3). Hoornbeeck, while ostensibly denying position 1, seems to broaden position 2 to the extent of allowing a retributive war for the sake of religion. A third category (Röell) simply affirms position 2, while a fourth (Wollebius, Ames, A. Marck, Van Mastricht, Turretini, Heidegger, Pictet, and Van Velzen) do not mention *religionis causa* at all. At best, some

Reformed theologians (especially the earlier ones), by allowing war to be waged in defense of religion, seem to open the way for Protestant rulers to intervene in countries where their faith was suppressed. By way of comparison, it may be noted that a Roman Catholic work on moral theology published in the Southern Netherlands corresponds to the position of Wollebius, Ames, and others. For example, the writer of an oft-reprinted theological handbook, Jean-Baptiste Taverne (1622-1686), discusses war in the context “De vitiis charitati opposites” (Taberna 1698 I, 257-64: “De bello”). He observes that the lawfulness of defensive war follows from natural law, while offensive war is supported by the Church’s practice, especially under the Old Testament. A grave injury to the commonwealth or its subjects is a sufficient cause of war.²⁸ Taverne nowhere mentions religion as a just cause of war.

3. Expositions of the Sixth Commandment

The moral and scriptural justifications of war adduced by Protestant theologians do not figure only in the theological ethics taught at the universities. In terms of the number of readers and listeners, explanations of the Heidelberg Catechism were far more influential in disseminating a Calvinist ethics than academic textbooks. Explanations of the Catechism were readily accessible to the broad population, both as reading material and, more importantly, in the form of sermons every minister of the Word was obliged to hold each Sunday afternoon. For this purpose the Heidelberg Catechism was conveniently divided into 52 sermons, the sixth commandment being treated in Sunday 40, where three “questions” are posed (nos. 105-7). The first concerns God’s demand that Christians do not dishonor, hate, hurt, or kill their neighbor, yield to feelings of revenge, hurt themselves, or put themselves in danger. The second question reflects on the root causes of manslaughter, such as jealousy, hatred, anger

²⁸ Taberna follows Augustine’s influential definition: Augustine, *Quaestiones in Heptateuchem* VI, 10: “Iusta autem bella ea definiri solent, quae ulciscuntur iniurias,” “just wars may be defined as those which avenge

and revenge. The answer to the third and final question draws a positive moral conclusion from the commandment, stating that Christians should love their neighbors and treat them with patience, peace, mildness, mercy, and friendliness.

One of the issues invariably raised in commentaries on the catechism regards the extent to which the commandment applies. Are there exceptions to the rule? One important exception is, of course, the lawfulness of governments to wage war. The explanations emphasize that according to Romans 13:4 the civil authorities do not bear the sword in vain, a claim invariably made in response to Mennonite and Socinian objections. For example, Petrus de Witte (1622-1669) poses the question whether it is permissible to kill in a just war. The answer is “yes,” if it is done at the command of a sovereign government (Witte 1656, 707-8).²⁹ The *Catechisatie* (1653) by the minister Cornelis Poudroyen (d. 1662) treats the subject at greater length. He makes clear that God himself commanded warfare in various Old Testament books (Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings) (Poudroyen 1891 II, 1010-14).³⁰ He also uses non-biblical arguments, arguing that the lawfulness of war is dictated by natural law, natural reason, and necessity. Yet religion plays a prominent part in his discussion—and not surprisingly, given the fact that Voetius himself corrected Poudroyen’s *Catechisatie*. If a Christian government is to fulfill its role as protector of the church (Poudroyen cites the classic text Isaiah 49:23, “And kings shall be thy nursing fathers.”), it should be able to wage war against those who oppress its subjects for religion’s sake. And there is the prophecy that God will arouse his people to wage war against the (Roman Catholic) Beast (Revelation 17:16-17).

Poudroyen distinguishes between general and particular just causes of war. There are two general reasons for waging war. The first is to avenge a wrong, the second to prevent

injuries.”

²⁹ De Witte refers to Hebrews 11:33-34, Jeremiah 48:10, and Luke 3:14.

³⁰ Poudroyen further mentions Luke 3:14 (where John the Baptist tells soldiers to be content with their earnings) and Romans 13:4 (to be able to wield the sword it must be possible to wage war).

damage to the commonwealth. The wrong must be of the utmost import, and all possible attempts should be made to resolve the conflict by peaceful means. Poudroyen then mentions six particular just causes of war. A war may be waged against an enemy who 1) invades the land; 2) plunders it; 3) insults envoys (as David's messengers to the Moabite Hanun were mistreated, 2 Samuel 10:4); 4) suppresses freedom; 5) violates law and justice; and 6) persecutes the (true) religion. Religion comes to the fore in Poudroyen's account in other ways as well. Soldiers may serve in warring armies only if the cause is just, a directive that excludes all wars against the true religion. Moreover, the best soldiers are those who are pious and godly. Such soldiers wage war "for God and the just cause," doing so in the fear of God and in good conscience, and they consequently display great courage (Proverbs 28:1, "the righteous are bold as a lion."). The biblical command to "love your enemies" (Matthew 5:44) applies only to persons or particular enemies, not to "general enemies." The Spanish are a case in point. As "general enemies of the land and of the church of God," they may be harmed, and it is even permitted to pray against them (Poudroyen 1891 II, 1031-32). It is clear that Poudroyen fundamentally agrees with positions 1 through 5 as summarized by Johnson. Apart from allowing religious purpose, the defense of religion, and an offensive religious war, he emphasizes that soldiers must be personally godly, and that a religious cause and its champions are righteous.

Like his tutor Voetius, Poudroyen probably felt spiritually akin to some English Puritans, such as William Gouge (1578-1653), one of Johnson's Puritan mongers of holy war. It is this relatively small group of Puritan-influenced Dutchmen who had Gouge's *Gods three arrowes: plague, famine, sword* (1631) translated into Dutch (Gouge 1666; Johnson 1975, 118-25). But in most seventeenth and eighteenth-century expositions of the Catechism, war is hardly discussed at any length—if it is mentioned at all. Some catechisms deal only with matters directly related to piety, so that Sunday 40 remains outside their scope (Sibelius 1650;

Comrie 1792 only reaches Sunday 7; Bekker 1670 does not go beyond Sunday 32). Others discuss dueling, mutiny, cruelty, insult or killing young children, and go on to mention exceptions to the sixth commandment, above all the magistrate's power to mete out capital punishment to murderers; war is often not even referred to (Lubbertus 1618, 708-12; Udemans 1640a; Alting 1646, 371-73; Coccejus 1679, 184; Faber de Bouma 1681; Hakvoord 1706, 390; Sibersma 1717, 608; Groenewegen 1706, 739-40; Groe 1752-53 II, 1031-32; Reiners 1760, 762-63; Liefsting 1809-10 III, 211; Ursinus 1790, 68-69). Some commentators distinguish between "innocent" or accidental manslaughter, permissible manslaughter (committed in self-defense), and necessary manslaughter. The latter is entrusted to lawful authorities in court (against murderers) or in a just defensive war (against enemies) (Molenaar 1743 II, 299; Outrein 1719, 581; Palier 1792, 295-97; Til 1725, 463; Smytegelt 1780, 605). Where war is justified as a Christian activity, the argument is always meant to refute Anabaptists and Socinians; many of the familiar biblical texts are cited; it is invariably observed that just wars may be started only by lawful sovereigns; and such wars are construed primarily as defensive or retributive (Teellinck 1650, 99; Kemp 1988, 689-90; Frein 1746-53 II, 565-71; Beeltsnyder 1654, 380-81; Ursinus 1736 II, 390-92; Vollenhoven 1790).

Johnson's position 2 crops up repeatedly. Typically, the defense of "Religion, freedom and the Fatherland" amounts to a just cause of war. The order in which these categories are mentioned varies, but it is clear that until the end of the eighteenth century many writers allowed violence in defense of religion, liberty, and *patria* (Knibbe 1727, 644-45).³¹ Only an occasional commentator of the Catechism took the opportunity explicitly to assure his readers that the Dutch Revolt was a defensive war fought in part for the sake of religion. It was a necessary war, waged for freedom of conscience and the defense of ancient rights and liberties (Gargon 1718, 772). Arguments gleaned from the Old Testament abound, for

example to show that offensive wars are commanded by God, such as when the Israelites killed the Amorites as the “executors of God’s just punishment” (Hagen 1743, 437-38). In a just war, soldiers are “*executors of the highest Justice*, and thereby protect what they have received from the Lord; namely their *Religion*, their *life*, their *goods* and *freedom*, punishing those who molest them” (Vermeer 1749-50 II, 490; Gentman 1692, 493-4; Tuinman 1744, 742-43).

With the exception of the “Voetian” Poudroyen, the general attitude of Dutch Protestant commentators towards “holy” warfare was extremely moderate. Most subscribe only to a version of Johnson’s position 2, the idea that the state may wage a defensive war with the aim of defending its own religion. A well-known explanation of the Belgic Confession, *Sion’s glory and strength* (1755-1758) by Arnoldus Rotterdam (1718-1781), similarly has little to say on warfare. Rotterdam just recapitulates the content of article 36, that it behooves the magistrate to destroy “all idolatry and false worship of the Antichrist” (Rotterdam 1890, 432-33.). With some frequency, writers accuse the Roman Catholic Church of trespassing on the sixth commandment by waging holy wars (Knibbe 1727, 655; De Frein 1746-53 II, 571; Sibersma 1717, 617), or attribute such warfare to Muslims (Gargon 1718, 772), or cite apocalyptic prophecies (for example Revelation 17:14) on the holy wars that will be waged by the church in the future (Curtenius 1790-92 III, 491; Tuinman 1744, 743). As for the Roman Catholics themselves, their commentaries on the commandments (the fifth rather than the sixth) do not mention religion at all, and cite Augustine in abundance (for example Backx 1711 II, 179-92).

At this juncture, it is important to take note of three points, each of which further weakens the contention implicit in much of the historical literature, to the effect that Protestant “ideology,” or more specifically Calvinism, is in some sense inherently belligerent. The first

³¹ A similar point is made by Martinus 1740, 517: war may be justified when it is begun 1) by a lawful government; 2) out of necessity; 3) for a just cause; and (4) for the defence of God’s Church and the

point is that the concept of holy war was very weak even among those seventeenth-century Calvinists who, like Voetius and Poudroyen, strongly sympathized with English Puritans. Thus, Godfried Udemans's *Spiritual rudder of the merchant's ship* (1638), which contains a detailed and lengthy account of just war doctrine, relies primarily on the Bible, Cicero, Peter Martyr, and William Ames (Udemans 1640b, 316-17, 324-25). Udemans distinguishes between defensive and retributive warfare, and defends the Dutch Revolt as a justifiable mixture of both. His discussion of the *ius in bello* is particularly impressive. He roundly condemns all excesses and explicitly distances himself from the Israelite destruction of the Benjamites, which he regards as a sign of unnecessary and unlawful cruelty.

The second point concerns the fact that none of the commentators rejected the demand that soldiers be personally godly (Johnson's position 4). But it would be absurd to expect otherwise, since no early modern pastor would even have thought of suggesting that godliness did not matter. The third point is no less important. Many if not most commentators were not really interested in justifying war from the point of view of man. It was God's use of war that concerned them most. The *Sevenfold Exercise on the Catechism* (1671) by Franciscus Ridderus (1620-1683) may serve to illustrate this (Ridderus 1671 II, 384-412). His explanation of Sunday 40 is almost wholly concerned with war. Ridderus worried that the Republic was on the brink of a new war—indeed, the *guerre d'Hollande* of Louis XIV actually did break out in 1672. He explains at length that God is the ultimate cause of war, which he proves from numerous Old Testament passages. But why does God inflict war on a people?, he asks. As a punishment for its sins, Ridderus responds, providing copious biblical illustrations of the harm caused by war. Ridderus takes great pains to emphasize that God's own people may be ruined by war (Ezekiel. 7:3; Jeremiah 16:5), even to the extent that a land may lose its "Church and public Worship." The emphasis in Ridderus's account is not on

commonwealth. Also Palier 1792, 295-97; Curtenius 1790-17 III, 491; Smytegelt 1780, 605.

justifiable or justified holy war, but on war as a just punishment for “God’s own people.” The chastisement of God’s latter-day Israel was a common theme in Reformed sermons or “jeremiads.” Yet the idea that war was an instrument for punishing sin was hardly confined to Calvinism (or to the early modern period, for that matter; see for example Hale 1971, 3-26). It is, in other words, important to realize that not all allusions to religious warfare necessarily concern what Bainton regarded as holy wars. Thus, references to the so-called Psalms of vengeance were often intended as a warning, not to the enemy, but to the domestic population. God punishes iniquity, and may do so by visiting a nation equally with hunger, pestilence, or war. As Psalm 7:12 has it: “If he [the wicked] turn not, he [God] will whet his sword” (cf. Teellinck 1621, which has Psalm 7:12 as its central theme).³²

4. Conclusion

Apart from Bullinger, only Daneau, Polanus, Alsted, Voetius, and Poudroyen accepted three or more of the positions distinguished by Johnson. Only Voetius and Poudroyen were Dutchmen, and they may well have been influenced by a specific group of English Puritans. A moderate version of Johnson’s position 2—the claim that a defensive war could be initiated by the state for the sake of religion—seems to have been particularly popular with many divines. Also, no writer denied the importance of personal godliness in soldiers fighting for the Dutch Republic (position 4). This affirmation of two out of six positions hardly constitutes a full-blown concept of holy war. Position 4 was bound to be defended by any minister with a minimal sense of pastoral duty. And if the “secular” just war tradition allows for the preservation and protection of values (i.e. the defense of “ideology,” “religion,” or “civilization” (Johnson 1991, 6)), even Johnson’s position 2 can be disqualified as an argument for holy war. Most likely, the support for position 2 evinced by Dutch theologians

³² The claim, once prominent in American historiography, that the eighteenth-century American Protestant clergy employed millennialist notions to turn a political cause into a holy one has been cogently repudiated by

reflects the political stability of the Republic as well as the gradual emergence of the idea of territorial sovereignty, which implied that states can act in self-defense within an international state system based on broadly accepted principles. From the point of view of theologians, “religion” (or freedom of conscience, as Röell put it) was but one aspect of the territorial integrity of the land that needed protection against external assault.

In any case, we may safely conclude that a full-blown concept of holy war was largely absent from seventeenth and eighteenth-century Dutch moral theology, and, by implication, that historical Calvinism (or Protestantism in general) was not inherently belligerent. In fact, seventeenth-century religious ethics concerning just war may have been more “secular” than has been assumed in much research—and, concomitantly, the role of thinkers like Hugo Grotius in the actual dissemination of the secular just war tradition less pronounced. This is not to say that seventeenth-century Calvinism was even remotely pacifist (contemporary theological reflection on Dutch colonial policies of piracy, plunder, and slavery would make an interesting research topic). However, historical analyses of such ethical issues as just and holy war would do well to concentrate on historical contexts rather than religious traditions. Different contexts give rise to different ethics. In this light it is interesting to note that sermons and pamphlets legitimating war on the basis of religious arguments again started to appear shortly after the demise of the Dutch Republic. In 1830, the Kingdom of the United Netherlands, a short-lived fabrication of the Congress of Vienna uniting the northern (Dutch) with the southern (Belgian) Netherlands, had to contend with a large-scale separatist rebellion in the south. Northern Protestant commentators called upon the government to crack down on the uprising, at the root of which lay an unexpected bond between liberals and Catholics. The northern clergymen who preached on Deuteronomy 20:1-4 (“For the LORD your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies.”) regarded the war of the Dutch

Endy 1985, 3-25. On the other hand, the tremendous influence of the Psalms within the Reformed tradition may have fostered popular conceptions of holy war; see Stanford Reid 1971, 36-54.

against the Belgians as something of a holy war (for example Zee 1830; Rutgers 1830). If apocalyptic hatred justified war in the sixteenth century, nationalist enmity did so in the nineteenth. Justifications of violence *religionis causa* and ideological motives for war are contingent, not on religions, but on the historical contexts in which those religions operate.

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